

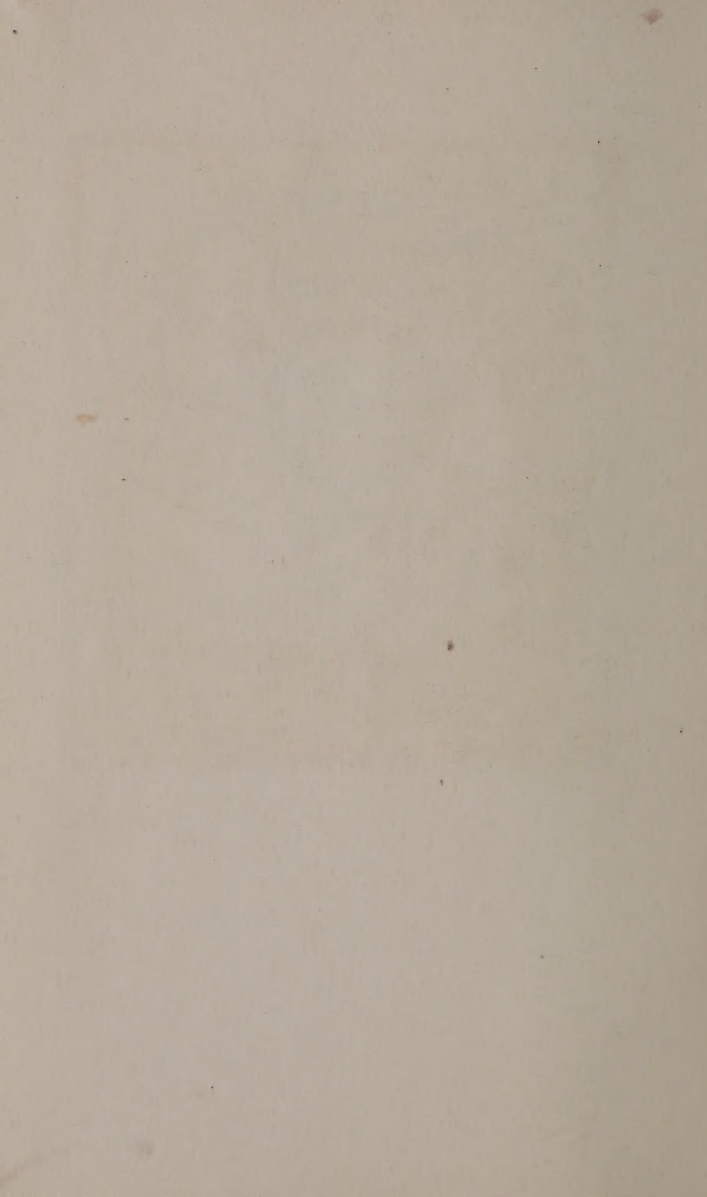
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PLANS

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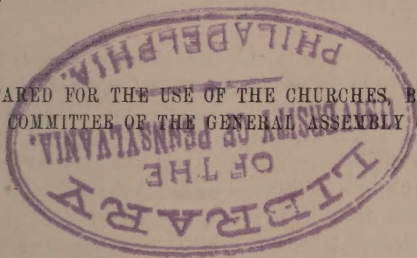
SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

PLANS

OF

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE

PREPARED FOR THE USE OF THE CHURCHES, BY A SPECIAL
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1869.



Copies may be obtained gratuitously by Congregations applying for
them to the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 821 CHESTNUT STREET.

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NOTICE.

The General Assembly, at its sessions in the Brick Church in the city of New York, on the thirtieth day of May last, adopted the following:

Resolved, That in order to aid those churches that desire to adopt some more effective plan of collection, the Rev. David Irving, D. D., the Rev. William E. Schenck, D. D., and Rev. Robert Strong, ministers, and A. McClure, Jr., and Robert Carter, Esq., ruling elders, are appointed a committee to prepare and publish in a small tract a selection of different plans which have been found by experience to be effective; and the Board of Publication is ordered to afford gratuitously a suitable number of copies of this tract to such congregations as may apply for it.—*Minutes*, 1869, p. 934.

In accordance with the design of this appointment, the following pages are now submitted to the Assembly and to the churches.

DAVID IRVING,
WILLIAM E. SCHENCK,
ROBERT STRONG,
A. MCCLURE, JR.,
ROBERT CARTER.

OCTOBER, 1869.

Plans of Systematic Beneficence.

THE consecration of our property to the Lord for sustaining and extending his cause in the earth is a Christian duty and rests on Christian principle. This is a matter of command in both dispensations; it is enforced by precept and example; and connected with its proper discharge are precious promises. The calls to observe it are many and varied, while its neglect is attended with loss.

This giving is set forth in the New Testament as a grace. It has therefore to be practiced—the method enjoined in the Scriptures being to set aside a sacred portion of our means or income for the Lord, and to give according to the demands of Providence and the necessities of the case. An intelligent appreciation of relative calls and claims is needed; and for the gathering together of the Lord's portion for these, times and seasons are to be set apart, when a sum proportioned to the believer's obligations to redeeming love, to the re-

quirements of the call and his pecuniary ability is to be bestowed.

To promote the discharge of this duty in and through the Church, system on the part of the Church is essential; and it should be a system that will reach all upon whom this duty is laid; and that is the best that takes in its operations the greatest number, that develops Christian liberality in a Christian manner, and that yields to all concerned the richest results.

No such method is as yet general in the Church. The small amounts received by the Boards; their loud and increasing calls for money to meet the demands upon them; the great number of congregations failing in whole or in part to contribute to these schemes; the legislation in the different ecclesiastical courts to bring the people into closer sympathy and more active co-operation with them, show that there is still a great practical defect in the mode of raising funds for their support and healthy growth.

PLANS.

All the financial arrangements for obtaining the contributions of Christians for missionary work in the home and foreign field may be reduced to four, viz.:

- I. Collections in the church on the Lord's day;
- II. Collections by collectors or by personal application;

III. Weekly contributions ;

IV. Daily offerings.

Whichever plan is adopted by a congregation, in order to success it must engage the interest, the attention and the cordial co-operation of all, whether rich or poor ; and the claims of the different objects must be so presented that the people shall see their relative value and be brought into loving and intelligent sympathy with them.

These plans are—

I. COLLECTIONS IN THE CHURCH ON THE LORD'S DAY.

This is as yet the common method in our Church ; and it is preceded by a sermon or some remarks on the cause for which the contributions of the congregation are solicited, or by a bare announcement : “The collection for the Board of ——— will now be taken up.” The advantages of this system it is stated are twofold : (1.) It leads the giver to act on the impulses which the Spirit makes in the presentation of the subject. (2.) It enables him to act on the principle, “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” The first advantage is gained by any other plan where the object is fully stated ; and the second, if it has any force, is not confined to this single method. While Christ denounces in this statement ostentatious giving, he holds up to the attention and example of the Church individual acts of generous, loving liber-

ality; and this principle is inculcated in both economies for consideration and imitation. But the great defect of this plan is that it is partial in its operations. If the cause has claims upon the Church, it has upon all its members, rich and poor alike, according to their ability. But many are absent from the church when the collection is taken, and it may be that they will be absent again the next year when this same cause is presented, and thus they may not for years have the *opportunity* of contributing to it. Sickness, unpleasant weather, absence from home on the part of members, and other causes, greatly interfere with the duties of many, and in the aggregate largely reduce what the united body should give to this or that object.

Another and a much better form of this method is the following: On the Sabbath appointed for one of the Boards, a statement is made respecting its condition, wants, etc., the following card is placed in each pew in an envelope, and the people are requested (see note at the bottom of the card) to take it home and during the week make their subscription, and return it with the money on the following Sabbath. On that day the deacons pass the plate and collect the envelopes, and any money that any of the congregation may give.

CARD.

COLLECTION FOR JANUARY.


Board of

"Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase." Prov. iii. 9.

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Prov. xi. 24.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts xx. 35.

NAMES.	DOLLS.	CTS.

 Please take this card home; consider prayerfully the claims of this cause. Let each member of the family subscribe according to his or her ability; add up the amount; place the money, with the card, in the envelope, and return the same next Sabbath.

The advantages of this plan are: (1.) It secures a subscription instead of a plate collection, but with no more trouble than the latter. (2.) It makes the collection voluntary. No one is influenced by the giving of others, as no one but the Session knows, and yet it secures thoughtful, intelligent giving. (3.) It enables the Session to know what each family is giving, and how their benevolence is developing. (4.) It aims to secure family giving. The card is taken home; each member is expected to subscribe, and this ought to secure family discussion as to the claims and wants of each Board, and thus to develop the intelligent benevolence of the young.

Its defect is seemingly that it provides no plan for reaching the absentees.

There are modifications of this card system, but the general principle is the same; so that these need not be presented.

It is recommended, where this plan is adopted, that the time specified by the General Assembly for each Board should be adhered to as far as possible.

II. THE SYSTEM OF COLLECTORS.

The leading characteristics of this plan are a subscription without cards, duly considered as to the amount, instead of a collection in the church; and an attempt to reach all in the congregation. For these purposes, after the cause has been fully stated in the church, the collectors appointed for

the districts into which the congregation is divided apply personally to each one in his or her district, receive their contributions, and pay over the same to the pastor or the treasurer.

This embodies some of the advantages mentioned in the preceding plan, and reaches those who were not present when the scheme was presented in the church.

A modification of this method is, where the congregation is visited once or twice a year by collectors for their contributions. These subscriptions are placed in a common fund, which is appropriated to different objects by managers composed of the Session, or of others appointed by the contributors. On a certain Sabbath the managers, through the pastor, present a report of the year's operations to the people, the amount raised, the appropriations made to the different Boards, the number contributing, comparisons with former years, etc. In this way the congregation see what becomes of their money, and their interest is increased.

This modification gives no opportunity of presenting each Board to the people for their individual interest in the same, nor of calling forth any enlarged contributions in any pressing emergency. It gives great—perhaps too great—power to the managers as to the allotment of the funds, and makes the interval for giving too great. Storing the Lord's portion should be frequent and systematic, and the

opportunities for bestowing the same should be greater than two or three times a year. Frequency in giving is important as a counteractive to selfishness and as a constant recognition of obligation. By this last plan the *act* of giving can never ripen into a *habit*.

III. WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS.

This method, suited to the early history of the Church, is worthy of consideration as an example by its promulgation in the Scriptures. It is therefore regarded by some as the divine plan, and consequently to be followed by the Church; but 1 Cor. xvi. 2 has reference more especially to *storing* for the Lord (or *treasuring*, as the original is) than to giving or distributing. But regular storing prepares the way for regular giving; and the one, where circumstances demand it or the action of the Church requires it, may be as frequent as the other. As a divine suggestion and as an example of the apostolic Church, it should be carefully weighed and its great intent followed by every steward of the Lord.

Where the collection is taken in the church each Sabbath, the sums contributed may be thrown into a general fund, and the total divided by the Session among different objects at the end of the year; but this interferes to some extent with individual preferences for distinct causes, and its distribution is likely to be controlled by the personal prefer-

ences of the Session. Another mode of distributing the amounts collected is to divide the year into sections, appropriating to each Board as many consecutive Sabbaths as its comparative importance seems to demand, and appropriating all the sums received within this period to it. This gives a specific time to each Board, and affords the opportunity to the pastor for stating the objects, operations and wants of each scheme of the Church.

The advantages claimed for this plan may be thus stated :

1. It is scriptural—1 Cor. xvi. 2.
2. It is simple—needs no machinery to work it.
3. It makes giving a part of regular worship.
4. It trains the young, as they should be required to give something every Sabbath.
5. It is frequent. It forms a habit and gathers in the littles.
6. It reaches all who attend upon divine ordinances.
7. It is flexible. If a providential call requires to be met, it can be done on one Sabbath, and afterward the regular order resumed.
8. It is protective, as by it outside objects can be excluded.
9. It gives scope to individual preferences, and allows each one to decide upon the comparative claims of different causes.

The successful working of this system will de-

pend largely upon intelligent sympathy with the object or objects on the part of the people, and still more on the education of each one into systematic giving according to ability, "as the Lord hath prospered." Otherwise the collection may dwindle with many into what is called a "*penny* collection." But where knowledge is communicated and an interest excited, frequent giving will not only impart the ease of a habit, but the power of a principle.

A modification of this plan is where the weekly offering is taken by collectors and gathered monthly. Envelopes and cards are left with each family. The former may be marked as follows:


GIFTS FOR THE TREASURY OF THE LORD

ON THE

FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

Presbyterian Church



 To be called for at the close of the month.

The card may be as follows:

<p>“The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”</p> <p><i>Lord's Days of a Month.</i></p> <p>5. 4. 3. 2. 1.</p>					<p>“On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.” 1 Cor. xvi. 2.</p> <p>WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS—“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”</p>
					Foreign Missions.
					Domestic Missions.
					Education.
					Publication.
					Church Extension.
					Disabled Ministers.
					Freedmen.
					Sabbath-school.
					Poor.
					Sessional Fund.
					TOTAL.

TOTAL

The main advantages of this plan have been already stated (page 13). It differs, however, from that where the collection is taken up consecutively for each Board, in that it keeps the entire work of the Church constantly before the people, and gives the opportunity for meeting, during the year, any emergency.

For convenience in distributing and collecting the envelopes, the congregation can be divided into sections, and the collector in each division can distribute the envelopes for the next month while collecting for the current month.

IV. DAILY OFFERINGS.

These have more especial reference to storing than to distributing, and are designed to bring every member of the church into the list of givers. As the plan embodied under this head is adopted by several churches in different parts of the land, we give its origin, design and operations as follows:

At present not one-half of the members of our Church contribute to the public collections; nor are the absent reached on such occasions. Not one-quarter of the churches take collections for *all* the Boards. Under these circumstances, the gifts of our whole Church to the Boards, excluding legacies, were last year only \$535,000, an average to each communicant of only \$2 10, or less than two-thirds of a cent a day—an amount certainly *far* below the ability of nearly every one.

To meet the defects as presented, and to secure a *permanent, reliable, immediate* and *large* increase of our benevolent funds, the following

FOUNDATION-FUND PLAN

has been proposed :

1. Each communicant who is willing to contribute at least one cent a day, each day in the year, to be enrolled and called upon monthly ; also any members of the congregation and the children may become contributors.

2. The collecting may be done by the Christian women of the church, under the direction of the pastor, or treasurer appointed by the Session.

3. The contributors to be divided into divisions of fifteen, and the amounts collected to be paid each month to the treasurer.

4. The total amount collected to be divided among *all* the Boards in proportion as their necessities require, as the Session shall decide.

5. While this thorough system is carried out, of collecting one cent a day from each contributor, take up the collections at the usual stated times for the Boards as is now done, that those who are able to do more can then do so, and also giving opportunity for any others who desire to contribute—using at such times just as much effort to increase the contributions as if this plan were not worked.

The advantages claimed for this plan are—

1. *It secures a large increase of our benevolent*

funds. We have 200,000 members who can give one cent a day. The result is \$730,000 a year. This will be additional to the amounts raised at the usual public collections. These collections, by actual experience, will not be seriously diminished by the collection of the Foundation Fund.

This present increase of \$730,000 will grow with the growth of the Church; it is beyond the reach, we might say *below* the reach, of financial storms, such as occurred in 1837 and 1857; and it is immediate, permanent and reliable.

2. *This plan reaches every communicant.* The cent a day is not asked for as a tax, but as a part of the vow of consecration of self and means made at the profession of Christ. It is to be the beginning of the setting apart stately of a proportion of their income "as God hath prospered," and it is asked for as a definite sum, both to secure this amount and to educate each one into the Bible system of giving. It is not, then, a tax nor an assessment, but a small free gift, collected in Christ's name from those willing to give it.

3. It leaves all gifts over the foundation rate to be given freely at the public collections, just as usual, without interfering with the free-will and private preferences of individuals. *Something* being secured from each one, the remainder of their grace is left between them and the Lord, under the instruction that every one should give not only *something*, but "*as God hath prospered.*"

4. It gives room for instruction, special information and pleadings at the public collections, and places giving where it belongs, as a part of the worship of God.

5. It ensures the support of *all* our Boards, and educates each Christian into sympathy with each branch of our work.

6. This plan works in harmony with the usual system of public collections, and needs no revolution of the present mode to realize its advantages. It supplements these collections to make them more perfect.

7. It secures in each church mutual acquaintance and visitation, and brings cases of sickness or want to notice.

8. *The plan is flexible*, and can be modified both as to the definite amount collected, the reception of extra gifts by collectors, and the mode of collecting, without disturbing the principle of a Foundation Fund separate from and below the collections.

This plan, like all plans, needs an efficient business man or woman at its head to act as treasurer and to supervise and instruct the collectors. No plan will succeed at first without watching and instruction. Its results will richly repay the labour of working it *throughout the Church*, for it will more than double our power as a Missionary Church, and educate our members into the observance of the Bible rule of giving.

CARD.

District No.		JANUARY.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.	JUNE.	JULY.
No.	NAME.	Collect 31 cts.	Collect 28 cts.	Collect 31 cts.	Collect 30 cts.	Collect 31 cts.	Collect 30 cts.	Collect 31 cts.
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
	Miscellane's Gifts							
	TOTAL.....							

DIRECTIONS TO COLLECTORS.

1. Collect in the first week for each month, at the foundation rate of one cent a day, and mark the *amount paid* in the proper column.
2. If any one wishes to give more than at the foundation rate of one cent

“How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

“The women which laboured with me in the Gospel.”

“Receive them in the Lord as becometh saints, and assist them in whatsoever business they have need of you.”

“As I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.” 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

This Fund, securing *something* from *every* Christian, is a foundation for the above Bible rule, which all are urged to adopt—*i. e.*, to lay aside weekly not only the cent a day here called for as the least Christ could expect from almost any disciple, but also additional amounts, small or large, “as God hath prospered.” These sums may be given to the collector monthly, to be credited without name. (“Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”) Or they may be laid by in store for the annual collections and other objects of benevolence.

“The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.”

ENVELOPE FOR FOUNDATION FUND.

<i>Received from</i>	No.	DOLLS.	Cts.	REMARKS.
	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			
	8			
	9			
	10			
	11			
	12			
	13			
	14			
	15			
	Misc.			
TOTAL,			ENCLOSED AND SEALED.	

Collector's Report for Month of _____

District No. _____

_____ COLLECTOR.

A MODIFICATION OF FOUNDATION-FUND PLAN.

This modification *omits all the public collections* for the Boards. Each Board is assigned a certain series of weeks or months. At the beginning of each series a sermon is preached or a statement made about the Board; and when the collectors call they solicit, in addition to the cent a day, extra contributions for the Board that is then before the church.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. As each Board has its own distinct field of operation, and is requisite for a certain department of work, and as it has been created by the General Assembly to meet a felt want on the part of the Church, it is therefore incumbent on each congregation to do something annually for its support.

2. As the children in our Sabbath-schools are soon to become the efficient workers and active members of our Church, it is important that their attention should be directed to the great benevolent schemes of our Church, their interest excited in them, and their help turned toward them.

3. As *intelligent giving* is all important for sustaining and successfully prosecuting the various departments of Church work, it is necessary that the people should know the operations and necessities of each Board. *For this they look mainly to the pastor*, and from his lips they should not

only learn duty, but the varied demands upon their benevolence.

4. As the benevolent impulses and actions of the people are largely shaped and directed by the pulpit; as the responsibility of calling forth this benevolence rests largely upon the ministry; as avenues to evangelistic labour are constantly opening and enlarging; as the calls multiply and the means to meet them are increasing; as combinations against the truth are forming and consolidating; it is important that the agencies of the Church should not only be sustained, but be placed before the people in such a form that they shall act in sympathy with them, and give expression through them of their loyalty to Jesus and of their obligations to Him and to their brethren.

5. As congregations ought to know not only the need of any object, but also what they are giving to aid it, it is suggested to pastors that they should publicly state the amount received, on the Sabbath following a collection, so as to satisfy a desire for information, to stimulate benevolence, and to afford matter for prayer, humility and thankfulness.

6. It is suggested that, before every public collection, blank cards and pencils be placed in every pew for the use of those not prepared with money.

A collection is often doubled in amount by this simple precaution.

7. At the public collections for the several Boards, a much larger amount than usual can

often be raised by giving the congregation a definite object to accomplish. We give, therefore, the following list :

\$900 will support a Foreign Missionary.

\$150 will support a Native Preacher.

\$75 will support a Heathen Child in our schools.

\$300 is the usual grant to aid in supporting a Home Missionary.

\$150 is the average grant to aid, if needed, a student for the Ministry, under the Board of Education.

\$400 will ordinarily pay the salary for a year of a Colporteur to distribute Christian reading in poor or neglected neighborhoods, under the Board of Publication.

\$500 will insure the erection of a House of Worship by a new and poor church, under the Board of Church Extension.

\$200 is the average aid granted to relieve a Disabled Minister, or the Widow and Orphans of a Deceased Minister.

\$250 is the average salary of a Missionary among the Freedmen.

\$100 will support a Student-catechist among the Freedmen.

8. It has been found that cards like the following, distributed in every pew, are very effective in securing the full amount desired :

\$900,

Contributed through the BOARD OF _____,
will secure [here state object].

This can be done

If 4 individuals or families will give \$50 each, = \$200					
8	"	"	"	\$25	" = 200
10	"	"	"	\$15	" = 150
20	"	"	"	\$10	" = 200
20	"	"	"	\$5	" = 100
Remaining	"	"	"	smaller sums, = 50	
					<u>\$900</u>

I will contribute \$_____ toward the above amount.

\$500,

Contributed through the BOARD OF _____,
will secure [here state object].

This can be done

If 10 individuals or families will give \$20 each, = \$200					
10	"	"	"	\$10	" = 100
25	"	"	"	\$5	" = 125
25	"	"	"	\$2	" = 50
Remaining	"	"	"	smaller sums, = 25	
					<u>\$500</u>

I will contribute \$_____ toward the above amount.

\$300,

Contributed through the BOARD OF,
will secure [here state object].

This can be done

If	5 individuals or families	will give	\$20 each,	=	\$100
10	" "	"	\$10 "	=	100
15	" "	"	\$5 "	=	75
Remaining	" "	"	smaller sums,	=	25
					\$300

I will contribute \$..... toward the above amount.

.....

Cards and Envelopes for the above plans will very soon be ready, and may thenceforth be obtained from the BOARD OF PUBLICATION, 821 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

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